



## Humanitarian Aid Decision

23 02 01

Title: Continuation of humanitarian air service (ECHO Flight)

Location of operation: ECHO Flight

Amount of Decision: EUR 7,000,000

Decision reference number: ECHO/FLI/BUD/2006/01000

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### **Explanatory Memorandum**

#### **1 - Rationale, needs and target population.**

##### 1.1. - Rationale :

Since its establishment in 1994, ECHO Flight has become a vital partner to most humanitarian NGOs operating in the Horn of Africa and Great Lakes region, transporting humanitarian personnel and supplies to dozens of remote locations that would otherwise be cut off from the outside world. ECHO Flight has a highly successful and well renowned record of operation, and has become a visible symbol of EU humanitarian commitment to the Horn of Africa and beyond.

Further to the liquidation of the operator of the ECHO Flight service, ECHO Flight as such does not exist for the time-being. Instead, DG ECHO funded air operations are implemented by the humanitarian partners ASF-B (Aviation Sans Frontières) in Somalia and ASF-F and WFP in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

Whilst the need for an air service serving EU funded projects remains high, both in Somalia and DRC, over the years priorities have changed in Somalia. Today, air transport in Somalia is predominantly necessary to facilitate access to rehabilitation and development projects funded by DG DEV/AIDCO, also with the objective of supporting the Transitional National Government. The use of air transport in support of humanitarian projects has become marginal.

DG DEV/AIDCO is currently preparing a tender for the identification of an aviation company for the continuation of a flight service in Somalia.

In DRC continuation of a dedicated humanitarian air service is required because of the appalling air safety record of national Congolese carriers and the very limited availability of reliable alternatives.

Experience has shown that a humanitarian flight service managed by FPA/FAFA partners is not well adapted to the needs in DRC. Instead, it appears that the most effective solution would be to re-establish ECHO Flight and have the service provided by a commercial aviation company with whom DG ECHO signs a service contract.

In September 2005 DG ECHO launched a new international open tender covering only flight services in DRC. This tender procedure is currently at the stage of evaluation of bids.

Should no new contractor be determined by the current tender, the Commission may seek to continue to fund Non-Governmental Organisations signatory to the FPA/FAFA to continue the air services.

The present decision seeks to re-establish the ECHO Flight services for one year.

### 1.2. - Identified needs :

The provision of ECHO Flight services, including the choice of destinations, is based on concrete needs for humanitarian air transport. As a basic operating principle, ECHO Flight services do not duplicate similar humanitarian air services or compete with sustainable commercial airlines offering safe and reliable humanitarian air transport capacity at acceptable cost.

In the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), there is no safe and reliable linkage between main destinations such as Goma, Kisangani, and Kinshasa or effective servicing of destinations of key humanitarian concern such as currently Bunia or Boende. Overland travel is dangerous and time consuming, or even impossible due to security constraints or absence of infrastructure. Following the significant improvement of the security situation in DRC, DG ECHO has, also in geographic terms, expanded its engagement in the country. This has created an additional need for air transport as many of the locations of DG ECHO funded projects can only be reached by air.

The use of ECHO Flight services enables humanitarian NGOs to reduce inventory stockpiles at field locations which often run the risk of confiscation or theft by armed bandits or local militia. It increases productivity of field personnel due to the ability to plan rest and recreation rotations at an appropriate frequency; and it increases the quality of humanitarian operations as supervisory visits can be conducted more frequently. In addition, an airborne stand-by evacuation capacity remains for many agencies a *sine qua non* for continuing project implementation.

### 1.3. - Target population and regions concerned :

It is envisaged to re-establish the ECHO Flight Operation in DRC. Other ECHO Flight operation areas could be added in Sub-Saharan Africa, or possibly other regions, depending on the existence of a concrete need for safe, reliable and cost-effective humanitarian air transport that ECHO Flight may provide.

DG ECHO is supporting some 40 programmes across DRC run by a roughly similar number of partners. This translates into hundreds of staff (both local and international) and hundreds of tons of equipment, although obviously not all require air transport. In addition there are other essential humanitarian programmes that, though not directly funded by DG ECHO,

would be eligible for air support, including humanitarian programmes funded by other Commission services or member states. At present there are at least another forty of these across the country.

#### 1.4. - Risk assessment and possible constraints :

Despite of its fragile nature, the peace accord in DRC has, by and large, allowed humanitarian NGOs to work throughout the area served by the ECHO Flight network. Whilst there is much hope that the positive development continues beyond the national parliamentary elections scheduled for later this year there is, however, no guarantee that favourable conditions will prevail.

## **2 - Objectives and components of the humanitarian intervention proposed:** <sup>1</sup>

### 2.1. - Objectives :

**Principal objective:** To facilitate the implementation of humanitarian and post-emergency development projects in difficult or inaccessible areas.

#### **Specific objectives:**

1. To provide safe, reliable, efficient and cost-effective humanitarian air transport capacity.
2. To create a technical assistance capacity in the field, to assess needs, appraise operational proposals and to coordinate and monitor the implementation of operations.

### 2.2. - Components :

The main task of ECHO Flight consists of the transport of humanitarian personnel and cargo. In addition, ECHO Flight performs emergency security and medical evacuations on an ad-hoc basis, and offers a highly valued pouch system.

ECHO Flight operations are implemented by a contractor, the future ECHO Flight Operator which is constantly guided and monitored by DG ECHO, notably through the ECHO Flight Co-ordination Office to be established in Kinshasa.

ECHO Flight is operating in accordance with the following basic principles:

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<sup>1</sup> Grants for the implementation of humanitarian aid within the meaning of Council Regulation (EC) No.1257/96 of 20 June 1996 concerning humanitarian aid are awarded in accordance with the Financial Regulation, in particular Art.110 thereof, and its Implementing Rules in particular Art.168 thereof (Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1605/2002 of 25 June 2002, OJ L248 of 16 September 2002 and No 2342/2002 of 23 December 2002, OJ L 357 of 31 December 2002).Rate of financing: In accordance with Art.169 of the Financial Regulation, grants for the implementation of this Decision may finance 100% of the costs of an action.Humanitarian aid operations funded by the Commission are implemented by NGOs and the Red Cross organisations on the basis of Framework Partnership Agreements (FPA) (in conformity with Article 163 of the Implementing Rules of the Financial Regulation) and by United Nations agencies based on the Financial and Administrative Framework Agreement (FAFA). The standards and criteria established in Echo's standard Framework Partnership Agreement to which NGO's and International organisations have to adhere and the procedures and criteria needed to become a partner may be found at

[http://europa.eu.int/comm/echo/partners/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/echo/partners/index_en.htm)

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- ECHO Flight is a humanitarian tool, and is not available for political missions. While development projects are also served by ECHO Flight, the choice of destinations, and the frequency by which these destinations are served, is guided by humanitarian imperatives.
- ECHO Flight applies highest air safety standards.
- ECHO Flight services are free-of-charge for entitled organisations/personnel.
- ECHO Flight operates in accordance to a general schedule. Flights outside this general schedule are possible, depending on the demand and the specific circumstances.
- ECHO Flight is implementing a system of access management, granting priority access to agencies implementing projects funded by the EU and its Member States, and providing for a maximum protection of abuse.
- ECHO Flight is service-oriented and customer friendly. This includes in particular transparency concerning all customer relevant procedures, notably through the publication of Standard Operating Procedures.

In order to maximise the impact of the ECHO Flight operation, the Commission will set up an ECHO Flight Co-ordination Office located at Kinshasa/DRC. This office will guide, monitor and control the ECHO Flight operation financed by the Commission. The office will provide technical assistance capacity and the necessary logistics for the achievement of these tasks.

### **3 - Duration expected for actions in the proposed Decision:**

The duration for the implementation of this Decision shall be 18 months.

This 18 months is necessary to allow for the start-up period of the new contractor, the ECHO Flight operator.

Humanitarian operations funded by this decision must be implemented within this period.

Expenditure under this Decision shall be eligible from 1 March 2006.

Start Date : 1 March 2006

If the implementation of the actions envisaged in this Decision is suspended due to *force majeure* or any comparable circumstance, the period of suspension will not be taken into account for the calculation of the duration of the humanitarian aid operations.

Depending on the evolution of the situation in the field, the Commission reserves the right to terminate the agreements signed with the implementing humanitarian organisations where the suspension of activities is for a period of more than one third of the total planned duration of the action. In this respect, the procedure established in the general conditions of the specific agreement will be applied.

#### 4 - Previous interventions/Decisions of the Commission within the context of the current crisis

List of previous ECHO operations in				
Decision Number	Decision Type	2003 EUR	2004 EUR	2005 EUR
ECHO/TPS/210/2003/02000	Non-emergency	8,400,000		
ECHO/FLI/BUD/2004/01000	Non-emergency		11,000,000	
ECHO/FLI/BUD/2005/01000	Non-emergency			6,500,000
	Subtotal	8,400,000	11,000,000	6,500,000
	Grand Total	25,900,000		

Dated : 06/12/2005  
Source : HOPE

#### 5 - Other donors and donor co-ordination mechanisms.

In DRC the flight service provided by WFP is co-funded by ECHO.

#### 6 - Amount of decision and distribution by specific objectives:

6.1. - Total amount of the decision: EUR 7,000,000

#### 6.2. - Budget breakdown by specific objectives

<b>Principal objective:</b> <i>To facilitate the implementation of humanitarian and post-emergency development projects in difficult or inaccessible areas</i>			
Specific objectives	Allocated amount by specific objective (EUR)	Geographical area of operation	Potential partners <sup>2</sup>
Specific objective 1: To provide safe, reliable, efficient and cost-effective humanitarian air transport capacity	6,800,000	DRC, as well as possibly other regions where relevant needs may arise.	- ASF - ASF-BELGIUM - UN - WFP-PAM
Specific objective 2: To create a technical assistance capacity in the field, to assess needs, appraise operational proposals and to coordinate and monitor the implementation of operations.	200,000		
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>7,000,000</b>		

<sup>2</sup> AVIATION SANS FRONTIERES, Aviation sans Frontières Belgique/Piloten zonder Grenzen België, UNITED NATIONS - WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME

## 7 - Evaluation

Under article 18 of Council Regulation (EC) No.1257/96 of 20 June 1996 concerning humanitarian aid the Commission is required to "regularly assess humanitarian aid operations financed by the Community in order to establish whether they have achieved their objectives and to produce guidelines for improving the effectiveness of subsequent operations." These evaluations are structured and organised in overarching and cross cutting issues forming part of ECHO's Annual Strategy such as child-related issues, the security of relief workers, respect for human rights, gender. Each year, an indicative Evaluation Programme is established after a consultative process. This programme is flexible and can be adapted to include evaluations not foreseen in the initial programme, in response to particular events or changing circumstances. More information can be obtained at:

[http://europa.eu.int/comm/echo/evaluation/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/echo/evaluation/index_en.htm).

## 8 - Budget Impact article 23 02 01

-	CE (EUR)
Initial Available Appropriations for 2006	470,429,000
Supplementary Budgets	-
Transfers Commission	-
<b>Total Available appropriations</b>	<b>470,429,000</b>
Total executed to date (16/01/2006))	201,700,000
Available remaining	268,729,000
<b>Total amount of the Decision</b>	<b>7,000,000</b>

**COMMISSION DECISION**  
**of**  
**on the financing of humanitarian operations from the general budget of the European**  
**Union in**  
**the Democratic Republic of Congo and as required**

**THE COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES,**

Having regard to the Treaty establishing the European Community,  
Having regard to Council Regulation (EC) No.1257/96 of 20 June 1996 concerning humanitarian aid<sup>3</sup>, and in particular Article 15(2) thereof,

Whereas:

- (1) In vast parts of the Democratic Republic of Congo access by road to humanitarian, rehabilitation and development projects is impossible because of infrastructure conditions and security risks;
- (2) As a consequence, there is a need for a safe, reliable, efficient and cost-effective air transport capacity notably for relevant EU funded projects in the regions concerned;
- (3) In emergencies such air transport capacity should also be made available in other parts of the world with a view to delivering urgent humanitarian aid;
- (4) An assessment of the humanitarian situation leads to the conclusion that humanitarian aid operations should be financed by the Community for a period of 18 months;
- (5) In order to maximise the impact of humanitarian aid for the victims, it is necessary to create a technical assistance capacity in the field;
- (6) It is estimated that an amount of EUR 7,000,000 from budget line 23 02 01 of the general budget of the European Union is necessary to provide humanitarian assistance to vulnerable populations, taking into account the available budget, other donors-contributions and other factors.
- (7) In accordance with Article 17 (3) of Council Regulation (EC) No.1257/96 of 20 June 1996 concerning humanitarian aid, the Humanitarian Aid Committee gave a favourable opinion on 23 February 2006.

HAS DECIDED AS FOLLOWS:

*Article 1*

1. In accordance with the objectives and general principles of humanitarian aid, the Commission hereby approves a total amount of EUR 7,000,000 for humanitarian aid operations Continuation of humanitarian air service (ECHO Flight) by using line 23 02 01 of the 2006 general budget of the European Union.

2. In accordance with Articles 2 (a) and 4 of Council Regulation No.1257/96, the humanitarian operations shall be implemented in the pursuance of the following specific objectives:
  - To provide safe, reliable, efficient and cost-effective humanitarian air transport capacity;
  - To create a technical assistance capacity in the field, to assess needs, appraise operational proposals and to coordinate and monitor the implementation of operations.
3. The amounts allocated to each of these specific objectives are listed in the annex to this decision.

#### *Article 2*

The Commission may, where this is justified by the humanitarian situation, re-allocate the funding levels established for one of the specific objectives set out in Article 1(2) to another objective mentioned therein, provided that the re-allocated amount represents less than 20% of the global amount covered by this Decision.

#### *Article 3*

1. The duration for the implementation of this decision shall be for a maximum period of 18 months, starting on 1 March 2006.
2. Expenditure under this Decision shall be eligible from 1 March 2006.
3. If the operations envisaged in this Decision are suspended owing to *force majeure* or comparable circumstances, the period of suspension shall not be taken into account for the calculation of the duration of the implementation of this Decision.

#### *Article 4*

This Decision shall take effect on the date of its adoption.

Done at Brussels,

For the Commission

Member of the Commission



## Annex: Breakdown of allocations by specific objectives

<b>Principal objective:</b> To facilitate the implementation of humanitarian and post-emergency development projects in difficult or inaccessible areas	
<b>Specific objectives</b>	<b>Amount per specific objective (EUR)</b>
To provide safe, reliable, efficient and cost-effective humanitarian air transport capacity	6,800,000
to create a technical assistance capacity in the field, to assess needs, appraise operational proposals and to coordinate and monitor the implementation of operations	200,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>7,000,000</b>